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Letter dated 16 October 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am writing to you following the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, Pascall Milo, in the general debate in the General Assembly on 2 October 1998, in which he made a number of tendentious and ill-intended allegations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Foreign Minister Milo proceeds from the allegation that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia conduct the policy of "ethnic cleansing" of Albanians under the guise of the struggle against so-called Albanian terrorism. The facts are different. Unfortunately, radical Albanian separatism and terrorism are a reality and the basic reason for the problems in Kosovo and Metohija. Terrorist gangs of Albanian separatists have committed an outright attack on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They committed heinous crimes, kidnapping, killing, raping and using civilians as a human shield and terrorizing and massacring citizens of all nationalities who refused to embrace their criminal goals. The legal forces of the State have taken protection and neutralization measures of a scope and intensity needed to put an end to such criminal activities. All police actions were directed against terrorists, not against the civilian population. Upon neutralization of terrorist forces, special police forces have returned to places of their permanent encampment. Today, the organs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia invest their best efforts to alleviate the consequences of terrorist activities.

The open and completely unfounded accusations against the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for so-called "ethnic cleansing" are the known constant of the official Albanian strategy. With the aim of obfuscating the support rendered to the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), accusations are made against the highest officials of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and involvement of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is requested. The proclaimed aspiration of Albania to become part of Europe's democratic milieu is in sharp contrast to its support for separatism, establishment of boot camps for terrorists and their infiltration into the territory of another State; it was hoped that such a form of State activity was an anachronism in Europe.

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In 1998, 1,273 terrorist acts have been committed in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, in which 140 persons were killed, 64 of them Albanians, 37 Serbs and Montenegrins, 3 Romanies and 36 unidentified persons, while 59 persons were gravely and 56 lightly wounded. A total of 704 attacks have been carried out against members and facilities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia. Ninety-four police officers were killed in a bestial way, 20 of them police reservists, while 193 were gravely and 140 lightly wounded. Two hundred forty-nine persons have been abducted by the terrorists, 162 of them Serbs and Montenegrins, 74 Albanians, 10 Romanies, 1 national of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1 Muslim and 1 Bulgarian. So far, 93 persons have been released, 9 have escaped and 29 have been killed. The fate of 118 is still unknown.

The call of Albania for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to intervene in Kosovo and Metohija, made purportedly in support of the "strengthening of peace" in that Serbian province, is an attempt to divert the attention of the international community from the chaotic internal situation in Albania and its responsibility for the support of terrorism and separatism. However, the agreement reached by President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, and United State Envoy, Richard Holbrooke, is convincing proof that the international community is committed to solving the contentious issues by peaceful and political means. It is hoped and believed that by condemning terrorism and closing terrorist boot camps in northern Albania, for instance, Albania will render its full contribution to this endeavour.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is unjustly accused of being against international monitoring or against enabling full insight in what took place in Kosovo and Metohija. Yet, it is widely known that over 200 foreign diplomats, 27 international humanitarian organizations and hundreds of foreign journalists have been in Kosovo and Metohija for many months now and that delegations of many Governments and an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) delegation have been invited. All of them have been granted full freedom of movement, personal safety and unhindered access to places they want to visit. As to the allegations about Belgrade's false manoeuvres and statements, your attention is drawn to the recently published and widely circulated "White Book", in which these allegations have been denied in a documented way and the true nature of the problems highlighted.

The allegations about "brutal violations of human rights" attributed to the legal authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia are a smokescreen behind which the real culprits are being concealed. There is no conflict in areas in which there are no terrorists, regardless of the fact that Albanians outnumber other residents also in those areas (the Morava district and the towns of Gnjilane, Kosovska Mitrovica, Pristina and others). Disruption of the normal life of people in Kosovo and Metohija, be they Serbs or members of the Albanian or any other national minority, and the terror by the so-called KLA are the primary cause of all the problems and suffering besetting this province. After all, is the blame for human rights violations to be laid at the door of the Government, whose policy, it is, for instance, to allow free publication of a multitude of papers and magazines in Albanian rendering undisguised support to separatism and terrorism, or at the door of those Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija who threaten and blackmail their fellow Albanians if they dare to start a paper or magazine of different orientation or profile?

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija is improving. Peace has prevailed since the cessation of combat operations on 28 September 1998. Special anti-terrorist police units have been withdrawn (5 detachments have been withdrawn to bases of permanent location

outside the province, 5 detachments to bases of permanent location in the province). Only those units that were in their barracks in Kosovo and Metohija before March 1998 remain.

Foreign Minister Milo's invocation of a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo and Metohija is designed to conceal the disastrous situation in his own country. What caused humanitarian problems in this Serbian province was the abuse of civilians by terrorists who used them as a human shield and by politicians who called on them not to return home, but to stay in the woods (the call was made by none other than Ibrahim Rugova himself in the Albanian-language daily *Bujku* on 20 August 1998).

There has been a steady stream, for more than a month and a half now, of large quantities of humanitarian aid to Kosovo and Metohija, including food, medicine, clothes and building material. The Government set up 18 humanitarian centres, and they are ready to engage in cooperation with international humanitarian organizations, primarily with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have great interest in ensuring normal life and work to all their citizens. This interest is the true motivation of the solidarity and humane assistance that has been rendered to all people in Kosovo and Metohija irrespective of their national affiliations.

The Parliament of the Republic of Serbia has established the Provisional Executive Council of Kosovo and Metohija of mixed ethnic composition, entrusted with the task of promoting further normalization and development in the province. Local government authorities, reflecting local ethnic composition, have been established throughout the province.

These facts are eloquent proof that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has complied with all the provisions of Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998) and 1199 (1998).

The most recent campaign and pressure, in which the world's most potent political and military mechanisms have been engaged, have been launched on the basis of unverified media reports about the alleged massacre of Albanian civilians in Gornje Obrinje. Judicial authorities are engaged in conducting an investigation of the matter, and those found responsible will be charged under the law. However, what is disconcerting is the silence about, and the lack of international outrage and response to, the verified massacres of Serbian civilians, including women and children, in a crematorium at Klecka (22 persons), at Glodjane (29 persons) and at Ratis (24 persons). Recently, another execution site was uncovered in the village of Dolac near the locality where the headquarters of the KLA was once located. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has invited international experts to verify these massacres scrupulously, and a delegation of the Helsinki Institute is due to arrive soon.

The key problem in Kosovo and Metohija is the refusal of the leaders of the Albanian political parties to engage in unconditional dialogue. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has extended 18 written invitations, and its representatives are still waiting for the negotiating team of the leaders of the Albanian national minority to show up at the negotiating table. After all, those leaders had left the negotiations in the first place, which accounted for the subsequent flare-up of terrorist activities and an enormous loss of human lives. They have boycotted the political process, raising always new conditions, demanding independence and refusing to condemn terrorism, blinded by their deceptive dream of Greater Albania.

Albania has done everything to support the separatists in Kosovo and Metohija. In doing so, it has violated almost every norm of international law, including the Charter of

the United Nations and the OSCE Final Act. In 1998, the border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was violated 110 times from the territory of Albania, and 40 members of the Army of Yugoslavia have lost their lives in these incidents. Albania is the only country in the world which has recognized the so-called Republic of Kosovo, allowed this phantom creation to open its representative office in Tirana and engaged in making "bilateral agreements" with it. Its police and armed forces are deeply involved in aiding and abetting the terrorists, while its territory is used for their recruitment, training, arming and infiltration into Kosovo and Metohija. Terrorist boot camps are located in Tropoje, Bajram Curri and Kuks, while Durres and the Tirana airport serve as ports of entry for terrorists from Europe and overseas, with full understanding and support by Albanian authorities and political parties.

Albania is the epicentre of instability that threatens to spill over to the entire region. Yet, despite the collapse of the institutions in this country, Albania cannot be exonerated for the blatant violations of the norms of international law and the basic principles of international cooperation, good-neighbourliness and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter published as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.